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All perfect praise be to Allaah, The Lord of the Worlds. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, may Allaah exalt his mention as well as that of his family and all his companions.

This material has been reviewed and forwarded for publishing and distribution by the English language department of IslamWeb.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to those who contributed to the publication of this book. May Allaah reward them abundantly for their efforts.

Young Men Be Productive

All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the first and last, the Sustainer of the heavens and earth. May Allaah exalt the mention of Prophet Muhammad, who was sent as a mercy to all mankind, his family and companions.

Have you ever seen a man whose back has become hunched, his hair gray, his steps heavy and his teeth lost? He has difficulty in praying, fasting, eating and drinking He was once a young man like you. He lived the life of young men. He walked, played and entertained himself as young men do. He thought that the days of young age will be long and the strength of youth will last forever.

Today, after he has become old and weak, afflicted with many ailments, he cries over his past. He cries over the time he wasted in vain play and worthless actions. He cries over the strength which has departed him and wishes to regain it so that he would utilize it in the obedience of Allaah. But it is too late. Every new day calls upon the son of Aadam saying, ‘O son of Aadam! I am a new day, and will be a witness to what you do, so take advantage of me, because once I leave I will never come back until the day of Resurrection’.

This man continues to live a life of sorrow and regret. He does not have the power to worship Allaah due to his weakness and age… he wants to pray, but finds it difficult, he wishes to fast, but cannot. Sickness has exhausted him, pain has overwhelmed him and that is why he cries in regret.

Beware of the Hope to Live Long

Dear young man! You may say, 'Why will I wait until I reach this level of weakness? I will repent before that, perhaps at the age of forty or shortly after, which is the age during which men enjoy the best of their health and strength. By then, I will have enjoyed my youth and so, will worship Allaah after that; Allaah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful, He forgives His slave when he repents, even if he has reached fifty or sixty years of age. As long as the soul of the slave has not reached his throat, Allaah will forgive him.'

Dear brother! In order to show how feeble this plan is, I would like to ask you a question: who has guaranteed you life until thirty or forty years of age? Who can guarantee that you will live until tomorrow? In fact, who can guarantee that you will stand up from where you are now? Do you not know that death strikes suddenly, and that it attacks youth just as it hits the aged?

Did you not see how many young men have died? Did any of them get the chance to repent, or were their deaths delayed until they repented? Did they benefit in their graves from the time that they wasted in sinning? Did they reach the age you want to reach before you repent? Why then do you take the risk and hope to live long enough to repent?

Why do you delay repentance and remain heedless when you know that death comes unexpectedly, "And turn to Allaah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you may succeed." (An-Noor: 31). The False for hope to live a long life is a form of heedlessness, and it is one of the major dilemmas, because if it was not for this false hope, negligence would not have taken place initially, and it is the reason people commit sins and delay repentance.

An Incompetent Youth

Dear youth! What guarantee do you have that when you do reach forty, you will still enjoy your strength and ability to worship Allaah in the best manner, as you claim? Is it not possible for a twenty or a thirty-year-old young man to be afflicted with diseases, which can incapacitate him and confine him to bed for the rest of his life?

Dear brother! Renew your repentance, perhaps this will save you from punishment, and beware of sinning, because the one who challenges Allaah will fall into destruction.

The Consequence of Delaying

Dear brother! There is another matter which you are unaware of, and that is that delaying does not have a limit. A person may continue to delay repentance until he reaches his grave. If he reaches thirty he would say, I will repent tomorrow, and when he passes forty, he would still postpone his repentance.

Every day which passes by makes him grow further away from Allaah, and away from repentance and the way leading to it. Only the determined person repents immediately and shuns sinning.

Dear youth! Beware of delaying and relying heavily and unduly on the forgiveness of Allaah. Indeed Allaah is All-Forgiving, but He is also severe and painful in punishment, “Indeed, the assault (i.e. vengeance) of your Lord is severe.” (Al-Burooj: 12), and also “And thus is the seizure of your Lord when He seizes the cities while they are committing wrong. Indeed, His seizure is painful and severe.” (Hood: 102).

There are usually three reasons behind being relaxed and feeling secure from the wrath of Allaah,

First, being overwhelmed by the immediate joys and pleasures of this world and so a person is blinded by them.

Second, delaying repentance, for if people think, then they would be careful and would not delay it.

Third, having hope in the mercy of Allaah and forgetting that Allaah is also severe in punishment.

A Youth Who Grows Up in Obedience

Abu Hurayrah, may Allaah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam said, “Seven people will be under the shade of (the throne of) Allaah on the Day when there will be no shade but His, … a man who grew up in the obedience of Allaah”.

Dear youth! Do you not want Allaah to protect you with His shade?

Do you not want to receive your record with your right hand and say with joy as Allaah says which means, “So as for he who has given his record in his right hand, he will say, 'Here, read my record! Indeed, I was certain that I would be meeting my account.'” (Al-Haaqqah: 19-20)?

Do you not want to meet the Prophets and Messengers in Paradise?

Do you not want to enjoy the virgins of Paradise?

Do you not want to enjoy looking at the Face of Allaah as says which means, “(Some) faces, that Day, will be radiant, looking at their Lord.” (Al-Qiyaamah: 22-23)?

Do you not want to enjoy pleasure that will last forever?

If you want all that we mentioned, then get ready, think about your destiny and where you are heading, and do not forget that life is short and fleeting.

A Prophetic Advice

Our Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam said, while advising a man, as narrated by Ibn ’Abbaas, may Allaah be pleased with him, “Take advantage of five things before five other things occur; your youth before you become old, your health before you become sick, your wealth before you become poor, your spare time before you become busy, and your life before death” (Al-Haakim & Al-Bayhaqi).

The Way Islaam Deals with Desires

Dear brother! It is a mistake to think that Islaam absolutely forbids and deprives us from fulfilling our desires and enjoying life, or that it prohibits fun. This is not true. Islaam has allowed fun but it has set certain boundaries for enjoyment to prevent man from becoming enslaved by his desires. Among the many things which Islaam has allowed, and even encouraged within these boundaries, are,

1. Marriage: Islaam has encouraged marriage and made it a means to control desires and a way for love and compassion to develop between the husband and wife, as Allaah says which means “And from His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.” (Ar-Room: 21). Due to the intensity of sexual desire at youth, the Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam gave them a

special advice saying, “O youths! Whoever amongst you has the requirements of marriage, should marry; as it is more effective in lowering the gaze and in curbing lust.” (Al-Bukhaari & Muslim).

There are many benefits to marrying,

- It is a fulfillment of the command of Allaah and following the way of the Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam.
- It establishes love, harmony and compassion between spouses.
- It prevents mixing between lineages.
- It preserves chastity and controls desires.
- It increases and strengthens the Muslim population.
- It protects the community against corruption.
- It protects against sexually transmitted diseases, which spread through illicit sexual activities; such prohibited relations can also cause enmity, famine and adversities.

2. Eating and drinking: Allaah permitted us to eat and drink anything which is permissible provided that it is not ill-gotten, other than during the daytime in the month of Ramadhaan and without extravagance. Allaah says what means, "Eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allaah) likes not those who waste by extravagance." (Al-A'raaf: 31).

3. Joking and laughter: The Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam used to laugh and joke, but used only true statements to entertain. Islaam does not allow lying or making fun of others for joy and entertainment. The Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam said, “Woe to the one who lies while talking, in order to make people laugh; woe to him; woe to him.” (Ahmad & At-Tirmithi).

4. Traveling and visitations: This is another allowed matter, on the condition that it does not include sinning, like mixing between men and women, smoking, listening to music and immoral conversations, etc.

5. Sports and exercise: A strong believer is more beloved to Allaah than a weak believer. ‘Umar, may Allaah be pleased with him, said, ‘Teach your children swimming, archery and horseback riding’. Youth should have good intentions when learning these things, like Jihaad for the sake of Allaah, self-defense and protecting himself, his religion, honor and wealth.

Be productive

Dear youth! We have talked for long enough, so why don’t we start acting? I admit that it is difficult at first, but remember the saying of the Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam, “There are two bounties which people do not give their due thanks (do not utilize properly): health and spare time” (Al-Bukhaari). It is as if you are being addressed by this, because you are in the age of strength and health, and have a lot of time to utilize, so why don’t you take advantage of this time by using it to do what brings you closer to Allaah and benefits you in the Hereafter?

‘Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood, may Allaah be pleased with him, said, ‘I hate to see man not utilizing his time in something useful for his life in this world or the life in the Hereafter’.

Ibn Shaybaan, may Allaah have mercy on him, said, ‘He who preserves his time and, does not waste it in what displeases Allaah; Allaah will preserve for him his religion and worldly affairs’.

Finally

Dear youth! Remember the following:

- Your life is a capital you posses, so do not waste it in unbeneficial things.

- Be selective in the company you keep and do not befriend evil people.
- Guard your prayers, because they are your rescuers. And do not sleep through the dawn prayer.
- Perform Wudhoo’ even when you find it hard to do so, attend the congregational prayer and spend time in the mosque waiting for the next prayer.
- Rush to the mosque as soon as you hear the call for prayer.
- Fast optional voluntary fasts, as they are a protection for you in your youth.
- Get yourself used to spending in charity because relieves it you from many hardships.
- Rush to perform Hajj. And remember that performing one ‘Umrah after another is an expiation of the minor sins between them.
- Recite a portion from the Qur’aan daily.
- Exaggerate in remembrance and supplication to Allaah, because Allaah loves those who remember Him and supplicate to Him.
- Read the biography of the Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam and his companions to take from their qualities.
- Attend sessions of knowledge, because seeking knowledge is an obligation.
- Be humble because arrogant people will not be admitted in Paradise.
- Obey your parents, because rebellious people will not enter Paradise.
- Avoid music and singing, because their love and the love of the Qur’aan can never be combined in one heart. So choose for yourself.
- Lower your gaze, as it is the action of the pious.